

## State Water Contractors

1121 L Street, Suite 1050 • Sacramento, CA 95814-3944  
Terry L. Erdewine - General Manager (916) 447-7357 • FAX 447-2734

January 23, 2006

Mr. Lester Snow  
Director  
Department of Water Resources  
P.O. Box 942836  
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

RE: South Delta Improvements Program

JAN 26 2006 00073

Dear Director Snow:

On behalf of the State Water Contractors (SWC), I am writing to express our strong support for the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) South Delta Improvements Program (SDIP), a critical water supply, water quality and environmental project. While SWC will also be submitting separate technical comments on the draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement (EIR/S), we wanted to take this opportunity today to commend you for moving forward now with this key project.

The SWC consists of 27 water agencies throughout the state that purchase water under contract with DWR. Our member agencies serve water to more than 20 million people in the Bay Area and Southern California, and 750,000 acres of irrigated farmland in the Central Valley. Our member agencies are fully committed to environmental protection and responsible water management, and regard the SDIP as a cornerstone in the system we need to meet California's water needs.

As you know, in order to have a safe, reliable and high quality water supply to keep up with our rapidly rising population and trillion dollar economy, we must better utilize our limited water supplies, using our existing infrastructure as efficiently as possible. Two-thirds of California receives its water from the Bay/Delta -- we need to make every drop count. Otherwise, we put the public and the environment at great risk.

In 2000, the state and federal governments initiated the historic CalFed Bay-Delta Program to reduce conflicts in the Bay-Delta and advance projects that would improve water supply and quality while benefiting the environment. Many environmental organizations supported the plan, as did water agencies, business interests and farmers. SDIP is the next step forward in this long-term planning effort for the Bay-Delta.

Like the Bay-Delta Program, SDIP is a responsible and balanced project to better utilize and integrate our existing water management infrastructure in the Delta. When complete, it will improve our state's water supply reliability, water quality, and the overall health of the Bay-Delta ecosystem. The project includes construction of seasonal tidal gates to protect fish and

### Directors

Yvica Wong, President  
Alameda County RC&WCD, Zone 7  
Ray Stokes, Vice President  
Central Coast Water Authority  
Dan Masnada, Secretary-Treasurer  
Cascadia Lake Water Agency  
Stephen N. Arakawa  
Metropolitan Water District of Southern California  
Thomas N. Clark  
Kern County Water Agency  
Russell E. Frieler  
Antelope Valley-East Kern Water Agency  
Thomas R. Hurlbutt  
Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District  
David B. Okita  
Solano County Water Agency  
Steven Robbins  
Coachella Valley Water District

Mr. Lester Snow  
January 23, 2006  
Page 2

JAN 26 2006 00073

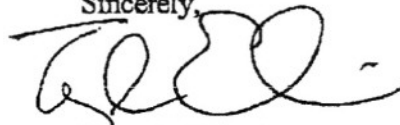
improve water circulation and quality in the Delta. It also includes dredging of select Delta channels to improve water deliveries for local farmers. And, eventually, it will allow State Water Project deliveries to increase modestly – only when needed and environmentally safe to do so.

Currently, the state is constrained in its ability to use surplus water supplies. We have the infrastructure to move the water, but until SDIP is approved, we cannot fully or responsibly use the existing system. While SDIP would provide at most a 5% increase in the average amount of water delivered from the Delta, it will provide the flexibility to shift the timing of water deliveries when a surplus is available and when it is environmentally safe to do so. SDIP does not require building a new project and is already funded through passage of voter approved bonds in 2000 (Proposition 13).

Given all these points, SDIP is supported by a statewide, growing coalition of water, agriculture, business, planning organizations, and local government officials, called California's Water Future. These agencies, including the Association of California Water Agencies, California Chamber of Commerce, California Business Properties Association, the Western Growers Association, the SWC, and many others, understand that water is the lifeblood of California. We understand it is our responsibility to use this precious resource wisely through all possible best management practices, including water conservation, recycling and storage, to ensure California's water future. And we understand it is imperative to have a more flexible water delivery system so that we can continue to accommodate growth in our population and economy while relying on existing water facilities.

SDIP is a key component of a responsible, balanced water supply program for the state. As such, we urge you to move forward with this critically needed project.

Sincerely,



Terry L. Erlewine  
General Manager

Cc: Hon. Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Mr. Ryan Broddrick, Director, California Department of Fish and Game  
Mr. Joe Grindstaff, Director, California Bay Delta Authority  
Mr. Kirk Rodgers, Regional Director, Mid-Pacific Region, U. S. Bureau of Reclamation  
Mr. Frank Aguiar, Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor  
Ms. Susan Kennedy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Mr. Dan Skopec, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of the Governor